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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 2nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 October 2012, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Messone ..... (Gabon)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 56: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (A/67/23 (chaps. VII and XII), A/67/23/Corr.1 and A/67/71)

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1. **The Chair** said that decolonization had been a defining issue in recent decades. It was due to the efforts particularly of the Special Committee on decolonization that colonial rule was largely a thing of the past. However, the work of the United Nations was not yet done: 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the United Nations list.

2. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on decolonization, introduced the report of the Special Committee (A/67/23 and Corr.1). It contained an overview of its work during the year and discussed specific themes such as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, information outreach, the work of specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations and the information transmitted by the administering Powers. The report also surveyed the situations of a number of individuals Territories and gave an account of the 2012 Pacific regional seminar, held in Quito, Ecuador, from 30 May to 1 June. As it had not been possible to conduct visiting missions since 2006, regional seminars had become a useful tool for assessing the current situation in Territories. The report concluded with the Special Committee's recommendations in the form of draft resolutions.

3. He drew the Committee's attention to a correction to be made in draft resolution IV on New Caledonia, where the date at the end of paragraph 20 should be changed to read "from 13 to 18 August 2012". Relevant portions of omnibus draft resolution VI on the small Territories might also subsequently have to be revised to reflect possible developments in the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.

4. **Mr. Morejón** (Ecuador), speaking as Chair of the Special Committee, recalled that the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on decolonization had consistently guided its work and would continue to do so during the Third International Decade.

5. In a time of global economic crisis, the regional seminars and the meetings of the Fourth Committee provided an opportunity to hear voices and concerns from the Territories and thus gain an objective understanding of their situations. The recommendations adopted at the 2012 Pacific regional seminar in Quito would further the Special Committee's implementation of the Action Plan for the Third International Decade, in particular with respect to the impact of climate change and sustainable development on the Territories. Moreover, it was encouraging that some Territories had participated in the recent United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (the Rio+20 Conference) in close coordination with the administering Powers. New Caledonia, for example, attending as part of the French delegation, had presented the joint position of other small island Territories of the Pacific Community.

6. Current challenges could be addressed only through the involvement of relevant stakeholders and on a case-by-case basis. A proactive, focused approach to the decolonization of each individual Territory and fluid, ongoing communication with the administering Powers were essential, while the participation of regional and subregional organizations would open new avenues of cooperation with the Territories.

7. **Mr. Khazaee** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, recalled that the Movement had always attached great importance to the right of

self-determination, and reaffirmed its full support for the aspirations of peoples under colonial rule. It was regrettable that the decolonization process remained incomplete, for colonialism in any form was incompatible with the Charter, the Declaration on decolonization and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Accordingly, the United Nations should continue to strive to eliminate it, in accordance also with the recommendations adopted at the Sixteenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Tehran in August 2012, and at the Seventeenth Ministerial Meeting held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in May 2012. The Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism represented a unique opportunity for the international community to attain that goal.

8. The Movement supported the hard work of the Special Committee, and urged improved reciprocal cooperation between it and the administering Powers. Administering Powers should pay compensation for the human and material losses that colonial peoples had sustained as a consequence of their occupation. Those Powers should promote the economic, social and cultural development of the peoples under their rule and help them achieve self-determination. Member States should not allow the economic and other activities of the Powers to affect the interests of the peoples, and should enforce the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) concerning the return of cultural properties to peoples under colonial rule or foreign occupation.

9. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), while calling for the release of the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners; and urged the General Assembly actively to consider the question of Puerto Rico. On the matter of Palestine, the Movement supported the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It was high time for all Member States to assume their responsibilities in the matter by working towards a two-State solution.

10. **Mr. dos Santos** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the associated States Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, expressed support for the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute relating to the question of the Malvinas Islands. Unilateral measures were not compatible with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and it was in the interests of the region to reach a solution to the dispute between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom regarding sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. In particular, the military presence of the United Kingdom in that region and its unilateral exploration and extraction activities there were not conducive to a peaceful solution. Furthermore, to regard the islands as Territories to which Part Four of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Overseas Association Decisions applied was inconsistent with the existence of a sovereignty dispute recognized by the United Nations. The Argentine Government continued to be willing to renew negotiations with the United Kingdom to reach a definitive solution. In the interim, MERCOSUR and the associated States had undertaken to adopt measures aimed at preventing vessels flying the illegal flag of the Malvinas Islands from entering their ports, and to exchange information on vessels bound for the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands with cargo intended for illegal drilling operations on the Argentine continental shelf.

11. In 1833, the United Kingdom had expelled the Argentine population of the islands and had prevented them from returning ever since, replacing them with its own nationals. The present inhabitants were thus not a people "subjected to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation" as defined in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The Malvinas Islands were a colonial territory, but without a colonial population, and their situation had been deemed by the United Nations to be a special and particular case.

12. An early resumption of negotiations between the only two parties to the controversy, in accordance with the repeatedly expressed wish of the international community, and encouraged by the good offices mission of the Secretary-General, would be desirable.

13. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), expressed renewed support for the commendable work of the Special Committee on decolonization. While more than 80 Territories had

been decolonized since that Committee's establishment in 1961, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained. In the context of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it was essential to complete the task. The administering Powers themselves must join in the effort to hasten decolonization.

14. In that connection, the Department of Public Information and the United Nations information centres had done admirable work in promoting the goals of the Declaration on decolonization. The decolonization webpage, in the six official languages of the United Nations, highlighted the Organization's work in that area.

15. CELAC reaffirmed its support for the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute with the Untied Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. A peaceful and definitive solution that safeguarded the principle of territorial integrity, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and those of the Organization of American States, among others, was essential. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom should refrain from hydrocarbon exploration and drilling operations and military activities on the continental shelf of Argentina, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/49. The good offices mission of the Secretary-General would continue to be useful in promoting a peaceful solution to the dispute. The Government of Argentina had consistently shown its good will in that connection.

16. The question of Puerto Rico, which the Special Committee had been considering for over 35 years, remained unresolved. Its resolutions recognized Puerto Rico as a nation entitled to self-determination and independence, and urged the General Assembly to examine all aspects of that issue. Small island Territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific, which were particularly threatened by climate change and natural disasters, should be supported through measures aimed at facilitating their balanced economic growth, in preparation for self-determination. The people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, in particular, should be allowed to shape their own future, and its was encouraging that the administering Power proposed to hold elections there in November 2012 as a step towards a return to representative governance. With respect to Western Sahara, the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to achieve a just, lasting and acceptable political solution, leading to self-determination by the people of that Territory, deserved support.

17. **Ms. Young** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), expressed concern that the process of decolonization had slowed virtually to a halt, with only one country having been decolonized in the course of the preceding decade. The Special Committee on decolonization was playing an important role, submitting proposals to the General Assembly; but because too often the Assembly's resolutions were not implemented, the Special Committee must be enabled to act more effectively. It should, for example, develop the pragmatic plan of action for advancing decolonization in the Third International Decade, that was recommended by the 2011 Caribbean regional seminar. In addition, greater engagement between United Nations specialized agencies and the Special Committee would be desirable. In the end, however, only the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories could determine their own future status.

18. The situation in the Turks and Caicos Islands had become a source of concern, when the administering Power had dissolved its government and legislature. However, a constitutional reform process had recently been implemented, and elections were to be held shortly.

19. The people of Western Sahara also had the right of self-determination. The efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General were commendable. Negotiations under United Nations auspices should be conducted in good faith and without preconditions with a view to a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

20. **Mr. Román-Morey** (Peru), speaking on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), said that colonialism was inconsistent with democracy and freedom. A significant juncture in the decolonization process had been reached with the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, but 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories still remained.

21. The question of the Malvinas Islands was of particular importance. UNASUR member States recognized it was a special and particular case and, as a sovereignty dispute, urged the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume bilateral

negotiations. They supported the legitimate sovereign rights of the Argentine Republic over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, emphasizing the ongoing constructive attitude of the Government of Argentina and its willingness to resolve the situation through negotiations, and calling upon the United Kingdom to show the same willingness.

22. The States members of UNASUR had agreed to monitor ships operating in the region, to close their ports to ships flying the illegal flag of the Malvinas Islands, and to inform the Government of Argentina about vessels serving illegal drilling operations on Argentina's continental shelf. In 2010, they had sought to avert the military exercises eventually carried out in the area by the British Government. Such actions tended to alter the situation unilaterally.

23. UNASUR reaffirmed all United Nations resolutions relating to Western Sahara, and supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to achieve a political solution that would provide for the self-determination of its people.

24. Speaking now in his national capacity, he said that Peru, a founding member of the United Nations, had always been strongly committed to the Organization and its efforts to eradicate the world's remaining colonial situations. That task would require a strong political will and the adoption of a case-by-case approach. Administering Powers should cooperate with the Special Committee on decolonization in expediting the decolonization process.

25. **Mr. Wei** Zonglei (China) said that helping colonial peoples achieve their right to self-determination and independence was a goal set out in the Charter of the United Nations, and historic progress had been made in the decolonization process thanks to the support and assistance of the United Nations. In recent years, the Special Committee had done much to help the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve self-determination, successfully promoting the holding of referendums in some Territories in order to determine their future political arrangements. However, with some 2 million people still living in 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories throughout the world, the task of decolonization was as important and arduous as ever.

26. Under the Charter and the Declaration on decolonization, Member States had a responsibility to show solicitude for the rights of dependent peoples and help them exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. China had supported the declaration of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and hoped that the Special Committee would continue to strengthen its contacts with the Non-Self-Governing Territories and further advance the decolonization process. His delegation also looked forward to the close cooperation of the administering Powers with the United Nations in that process.

27. China consistently supported efforts by the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve self-determination. His delegation would continue to participate actively in the work of the Special Committee, and closely cooperate with other members of the Committee to promote positive outcomes for the Third Decade and fulfill the historic mission entrusted to them by the Charter and the Declaration.

28. **Mr. León González** (Cuba) said that the scourge of colonialism had not yet been eradicated despite the serious efforts of the Special Committee on decolonization and its pursuit of dialogue and cooperation, which had unfortunately not been reciprocated by all administering Powers. The people of Puerto Rico, for example, had endured over a century of United States colonialism. Yet they had maintained their cultural and spiritual identity, even though they had not yet achieved national sovereignty. The Committee had recognized their inalienable right of self-determination and independence, had asked the General Assembly to take up the question of Puerto Rico as a colonial issue and had called for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners who were being unjustly detained in prisons in the United States.

29. The conflict in Western Sahara was another decolonization issue covered by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The Sahrawi people had the right to self-determination. Recent rounds of formal negotiations and informal talks had not yet led to any definite result, but the parties had reaffirmed their commitment to further talks. It was to be hoped that a solution compatible with the Charter and the Declaration was not far off.

30. The Cuban delegation unreservedly supported the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic in its sovereignty dispute with the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, which were an integral part of

Argentinean territory. General Assembly resolution 31/49 had called upon the two parties to refrain from taking decisions that would introduce unilateral modifications in the situation: exploring and exploiting the islands' natural resources were clearly contrary to the terms of that resolution. Furthermore, any actions tending to militarize the South Atlantic, which the United Nations had proclaimed to be a zone of peace, would only escalate tensions and delay a settlement. A viable solution could be reached only through bilateral negotiations; and Cuba urged the United Kingdom to respond positively to Argentina's expressions of willingness.

31. Non-Self-Governing Territories could obtain substantial benefits from support provided by United Nations specialized agencies, other international institutions and Member States, especially for the training of professionals in the Territories. Cuba, for one, although a poor country and laboring under a criminal blockade imposed by the Government of the United States, had cooperated to that end with various countries, especially from the developing world. To take only one example, over 300 Sahrawi young people were currently studying in Cuba. The Department of Public Information as well should continue giving priority to the issue of decolonization. The discussions and conclusions of the valuable regional seminars, which were featured on the Department's webpage, could usefully be covered in the worldwide media and debated in academic forums.

32. **Mr. Orellana** (Guatemala) expressed firm support for the legitimate sovereign rights of the Argentine Republic in respect of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom represented a special and particular colonial situation, because the territory was colonized, but not the people, the original inhabitants having been forcibly displaced in 1833. The principle of self-determination did not apply in such a case of violation of territorial integrity. The activities being conducted unilaterally by the United Kingdom on the Argentine continental shelf were clearly a matter of concern. It was to be hoped that the parties to the dispute would soon resume bilateral negotiations with a view to reaching a just, peaceful and lasting solution; certainly one of the parties, Argentina, had consistently shown its willingness to pursue that approach.

33. In the case of Western Sahara, the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy since 2006 to help the parties to the conflict seek a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution were laudable. Progress had been made in applying and extending confidence-building measures, and the parties and the neighboring States should continue to support them. A solution on the issue was essential, not only for the people of Western Sahara but for the security, stability and integration of the Maghreb as a whole.

34. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) said that the persistence of colonialism should be seen as an opportunity as well as a challenge. His Government fully supported the work of the Special Committee as the central body directing the process of decolonization, pursuant to the two guiding principles established by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), namely the right of self-determination and territorial integrity. It was incumbent upon administering Powers to cooperate with the Special Committee. In the twenty-first century, no people could be subjected to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation, for they were crimes against human rights, Charter principles and world peace.

35. However, the principle of self-determination could not be distorted to justify an illegal occupation that had continued since 1833 in violation of the territorial integrity of Argentina. The sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas had been recognized in successive General Assembly resolutions as a special and particular colonial situation which should be solved through negotiations between the only two parties to the dispute, taking the interest of the inhabitants of the islands into account. The situation was special and particular because the inhabitants were not a colonized population; they were British nationals who had replaced the original inhabitants and consistently prevented the return of all but a few token Argentines. Accordingly, a referendum on the island's future would be illegal and spurious, and would not constitute a genuine exercise of self-determination.

36. At the same time, the United Kingdom was illegally exploring and exploiting the renewable and non-renewable resources of the disputed archipelagos and surrounding maritime areas, contrary to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 31/49, which called upon both parties to refrain from

introducing unilateral modifications to the situation during the settlement process. In addition, disregarding maritime norms and the regional policy of peaceful settlement of disputes, the United Kingdom was conducting ongoing military and missile-launching exercises there, thereby militarizing the South Atlantic in violation of international law and the mandate of the international community. Its actions had drawn protests not only from Argentina but from the major regional organizations.

37. Argentina had consistently demonstrated its willingness to negotiate a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute, but the United Kingdom, in effect talking advantage of its privileged position as a permanent member of the Security Council while ignoring the special responsibilities such a position entailed, had refused to assume its international obligations. The dispute was now more than a bilateral question between two States; it had become a global issue involving the eradication of the last vestiges of colonialism. However, in any negotiated settlement, Argentina was prepared to respect the interests and way of life of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands.

38. **Mr. Ulibarri** (Costa Rica) said that his delegation fully supported the decolonization process, which was one of the most remarkable achievements of the twentieth century. The Special Committee on decolonization had done admirable work in that connection. However, colonialism still was not entirely a thing of the past.

39. The sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands was one unresolved issue. The islands had been part of Argentina since its independence, and the justice of Argentina's claim to them had been recognized in a number of General Assembly resolutions. Unilateral actions there, such as natural resource exploration and extraction, violated international calls for the parties to refrain from taking actions likely to exacerbate the territorial dispute. It was an established regional position that a negotiated settlement in keeping with relevant resolutions of the United Nations and OAS would be beneficial for the region.

40. In the case of Western Sahara, the challenge was to find a peaceful, lasting, just, democratic solution that was acceptable to all parties, one that was in line with international law and respected human rights. Human rights monitoring should be part of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and the prospective referendum should include the options of independence, autonomy or integration.

41. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) noted that in the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism there were still some Non-Self-Governing Territories, more than half of them in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In the invaluable regional seminars held by the Special Committee — most recently in Ecuador — it was crucial to ensure the participation of Territorial representatives in order to hasten the pace of decolonization.

42. The General Assembly should consider the colonial situation of Puerto Rico in all its aspects, and the colonial Power, the United States, releasing the Puerto Rican political prisoners it was holding in detention, should allow the Puerto Rican people to exercise its right of self-determination and join the Latin American and Caribbean community of nations.

43. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were integral parts of the territory of Argentina, having been seized by force by the United Kingdom in 1833. That country should heed the voice of the international community and resume bilateral negotiations with Argentina with a view to finding a peaceful political solution that would end the United Kingdom's growing militarization of those Argentine lands, an integral part of Latin America.

44. Nicaragua reiterated its solidarity with the liberation struggle of the Sahrawi people as well. It was to be hoped that negotiations between the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Morocco would soon resume and lead to a United Nations sponsored referendum in which the Sahrawi people could finally exercise their right of self-determination.

45. **Mr. Tarar** (Pakistan) said that the forthright pursuit of a decolonization agenda was imperative, with the Fourth Committee providing the platform for the engagement of the entire United Nations system in concerted action with all others involved in the pursuit. It was regrettable that a Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had been necessary. The primary onus for decolonization fell on the administering Powers, which were the main cause of

the persistence of the status quo. They should display the political will to engage with their Territories on issues of governance, while the United Nations system should ensure that their peoples were cognizant of the options open to them.

46. Self-determination was an incontrovertible right, vital to preserving peace, so basic that it was universal and not limited to officially designated Territories. In South Asia, the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir had been recognized in a number of Security Council resolutions. Pakistan was committed to finding peaceful resolution to that dispute. In the Middle East, the just struggle of the Palestinian people for a viable State of their own and membership in the United Nations deserved support and would be a guarantor of regional peace. Lastly, it was to be hoped that a just and mutually acceptable settlement of the issue of Western Sahara, one that provided for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with Security Council resolutions, would soon be achieved. That too would be a boost for regional peace.

47. **Ms. Morejón** (Ecuador) noted that article 416 of her country's Constitution proclaimed the right of self-determination of peoples through peaceful means.

48. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas continued to be illegally occupied. The General Assembly had called repeatedly for negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom to resolve the sovereignty dispute. Argentina had consistently expressed its willingness to do so, but the United Kingdom continued to refuse, thereby offering an affront not only to Argentina but to the entire region.

49. The conflict in Western Sahara was a question of decolonization covered by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The suspension of MINURSO operations since 2003 had led to disagreement over the mission's mandate, and the requirement that its vehicles must carry Moroccan diplomatic licence plates had undermined its authority and the perception of neutrality. None the less, confidence-building measures among the several parties and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), such as family visits to prisoners or the repatriation of refugees, had had a positive effect.

50. The colonization of Puerto Rico was over a century old. After more than 30 resolutions by the Special Committee in support of its self-determination and independence, it was to be hoped that the General Assembly would consider the matter in all its aspects. Her delegation called once again for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners being held in the United States.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

51. **Ms. Grant** (United Kingdom), said that the United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Sandwich Islands, South Georgia and the surrounding maritime areas; and it had its usual modern relationship with the Territory based on partnership and shared values. The principle of self-determination as set out in the Charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was the basis of her Government's position on the Falkland Islands: there could be no negotiations on the issue unless and until such time as the islanders so wished.

52. The democratically elected representatives of the Falkland Islands, appearing once again before the Special Committee, had argued clearly for the people's legal entitlement to exercise their right to self-determination, recalling that no indigenous people and no civilian population had been expelled from the Falkland Islands prior to their settlement, over 150 years previously, by the ancestors of the current inhabitants. They were convinced that, like other peoples, they had the right of self-determination, a fact that Argentina unfortunately ignored.

53. There were many opportunities for cooperation relating to fisheries and offshore activities in the South Atlantic, but Argentina had rejected them, and had taken economic measures, banning charter flights and restricting shipping to the Falklands and penalizing companies wishing to do business there.

54. The United Kingdom had carried out routine military exercises and maintained an unchanged defensive military posture in the South Atlantic for 30 years. It was fully committed to defending the rights of the people of the Falkland Islands to determine their own future, and a referendum to be held in 2013 would make their wishes clear to the international community.

55. Speaking in exercise of the right of reply in the matter of the Turks and Caicos Islands, she said that since the suspension of the government there in 2009, much progress had been made towards good

governance and sound financial management, and elections would in fact be held in November 2012. Ordinances had been introduced providing for clear voting procedures and regulating funding of political parties and campaigns, and campaign methods, and a new Constitution would be brought into force on 15 October following extensive public consultation in the Territory. Other new ordinances regulated the transparent management of public finances and instituted independent controls.

56. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) recalled that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of Argentina, and that the sovereignty dispute over them had been recognized by various international organizations. The General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization had called in repeated resolutions for a negotiated settlement of that dispute, as had OAS. It was regrettable that the British Government, unsure of its ground, sought to distort historical facts in an attempt to disguise its act of usurpation in 1833, which Argentina had condemned from the outset. It should instead, acting as a responsible Member of the Organization, immediately resume the negotiations called for. The principle of self-determination — as concluded also by the United Nations — simply did not enter into what was a sovereignty issue between two Governments.

57. It was also regrettable that the United Kingdom was continuing to appropriate Argentina's natural resources, in violation of international law, and that it was increasing the militarization of the South Atlantic, allegedly to protect the right of self-determination of the population in the Malvinas Islands. The holding of a referendum among British subjects in the absence of any colonized people there would be an illegal exercise that did not address the heart of the question, and its outcome would not put an end to the sovereignty dispute or take into account the indisputable rights of Argentina. The interests and way of life of the inhabitants of the islands were adequately protected by the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the Constitution of the Argentine Republic.

58. **Mr. Gupta** (India) said that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India, and that the issue raised by the representative of Pakistan was irrelevant to the work of the Committee. The Indian Constitution guaranteed the fundamental rights of all its citizens. The people of Jammu and Kashmir had repeatedly expressed their free will and peacefully chosen their destiny in accordance with democratic practices.

59. **Mr. Tarar** (Pakistan) said that according to the Declaration on decolonization, all peoples under alien subjugation had the right of self-determination. The right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir had been recognized in numerous Security Council resolutions, which had pronounced that the final disposition would be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. To date that had not happened; elections conducted by Indian authorities were no substitute. The people of Jammu and Kashmir had yet to exercise their right of self-determination.

60. **Mr. Gupta** (India), reiterated that the state of Kashmir was and had always been an integral part of India. Furthermore, the issue did not pertain to the work of the Committee. The remarks of the representative of Pakistan were therefore completely untenable, and he rejected them in their entirety.

Requests for hearings

61. **The Chair** drew attention to 74 requests for hearings under agenda item 60, one relating to Guam (A/C.4/67/2), two relating to the Turks and Caicos Islands (A/C.4/67/3), one under the item itself (A/C.4/67/4) and 70 relating to Western Sahara (A/C.4/67/5). He took it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

62. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.